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Editorial 13.1

This issue of the journal is an example of the chronological and geographical range covered in conflict archaeology. The papers in this volume range from the third millennium BC to the Cold War, and spatially from Europe to the Pacific and the Levant. The topics covered are equally diverse: considerations of weaponry, of cultural resource management, of military infrastructure. This reflects the strength of conflict archaeology as a topic, which is also reflected in the continuing success of the Fields of Conflict conference which attracts high-quality presentations on a wide range of topics.

Looking at the papers in detail, Paz's consideration of archery in the Levant in the third millennium BC opens the question of whether archery was used in warfare during this period. There is some evidence for archery during the period, but not necessarily in contexts where the warfare known to have happened might suggest arrowheads would be found. The paper reviews the evidence for archery in general, highlights locations where the evidence may point to the use of archery in war and then offers reasons for the surprisingly low density of arrowheads in the archaeological record for this period.

Foard and Partida offer a look at the battlefields of Flanders. Particularly now, when the commemoration of the First World War has reached a crescendo with the anniversary of the guns falling silent in 1918, the popular perception of warfare in Flanders is focused on trenches. What this paper does is to focus on the earlier conflicts that raged across Flanders, looking at medieval and post-medieval battlefields. The paper also provides a methodology for the assessment of battlefields, provides a consideration of the threats they currently face and discusses the future management and conservation of these battlefields. This is a useful addition to the growing literature on the management of battlefields, which shows how approaches are developing with each attempt to provide a management framework.

The paper by Dixon, Lash and Schaefer discusses the Japanese defences on the island of Pagan in the Marianas Islands of the Pacific. This was an island fortified by the Japanese in the expectation that the Americans would force a landing as part of the war in the Pacific in the Second World War. The paper notes that the island was bypassed and was never involved in the vicious fighting that took place elsewhere in the Marianas, but that the surviving remains give a clear understanding of the Japanese defensive strategy. Pagan, whose defenders could refer to the progressive destruction of Japanese garrisons on other islands in the Marianas, can be seen as a development away from the unsuccessful tactics of defence at the water's edge, towards defence in depth. Elements of both tactics are present on Pagan, and as the authors note, Pagan could easily have gone down in history alongside Saipan, Palau, or Iwo Jima.

The final paper, from Axelsson, Gustafsson, Karlsson and Persson, comes more into recent times, focusing on a Swedish command centre from the Cold War. Rather than simply report on the fieldwork undertaken at the site, the paper also looks at the issue of whether Cold War archaeology has a relevance, either in terms of the discipline or in terms of public engagement with archaeology. They note the importance of personal testimonies

in understanding the realities of how a site operated and what life was like on that site. This is recognisable to anyone who has worked on sites from living memory; the anecdotes offered up by people who were there can add an extra dimension to our understanding and provide nuance to an official or accepted narrative. The experience of the individual is rarely captured in official documentation, and frequently never written down in diaries or letters. It only emerges in conversation, and often when stimulated by being back in the same location or looking at structures or artefacts that stimulate long buried memories; an archaeological version of Proust's madeleine cake.

This issue is an eclectic mix of papers that underlines quite how broad conflict archaeology is, and how diverse the approaches to its study. From a sub-discipline that focused on the study of battlefields, conflict archaeology has opened out into a broad church that is inherently interdisciplinary. It has become ever more mainstream as more conferences feature conflict archaeology-themed papers, and more and more research is undertaken into conflict-related themes. As an academic endeavour, conflict archaeology is in rude health.